

Dear Colleagues,

The Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses (TPAPN) continually leverages emerging knowledge to perform its mission. The program has made many changes over the past year to more effectively work with employers of Texas nurses. This letter shares insights for our partners about these refinements.

The TPAPN mission remains consistent with core values to protect the public, return nurses to safe practice, and promote professional accountability for nurses and employers. Texas state law strongly supports successful peer assistance by providing civil immunity to those faced with reporting TPAPN-related matters in good faith, and also for all employers who work with peer-assisted nurses in good faith.

Assistance emphasizes rehabilitation and recovery, as well as monitoring of practice and ongoing recovery following return to work. Participation is voluntary, and may be initiated as an alternative to Texas State Board of Nursing action regarding a nurse's licensure, or in some cases, as a mechanism mandated by the Board of Nursing to maintain licensure.

Peer assistance is available to nurses faced with a variety of diagnoses. TPAPN accepts eligible nurses who may benefit from peer assistance services. TPAPN has established a wider variety of circumstances than were covered previously. Scenarios now include individuals with substance use disorders, co-occurring disorders, psychiatric disorders, first time incidents by individuals without practice or criminal history, individuals with self-disclosed psychiatric disorders, and nonadherent TPAPN referrals. Each scenario presents a unique set of circumstances; TPAPN management of these scenarios has evolved to address these differences.

TPAPN has further evolved to address circumstances involving legitimately prescribed medications associated with use disorders. When participants are prescribed such medications, they are required to refrain from work, but may resume work 24 hours after taking the last dose. As always, TPAPN stands ready to assist in related matters where concerns may arise.

Program costs for participation are borne by individual participants and funds dedicated annually by the Texas State Board of Nursing. The individual contributions of participants are vital for individuals to fully invest in their own recovery. The Board of Nursing recognizes the importance of a strong, supportive program to support many of its most talented colleagues under difficult circumstances.

You can find additional detailed information which accompanies this letter. We hope you find this information helpful. We greatly appreciate the efforts of employers who understand the importance of TPAPN and its impact on the nursing profession.

Sincerely,

Texas Peer Assistance Program for Nurses
TPAPN Advisory Committee 2015/2016
tpapn.org